

Message Text

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R 202055Z DEC 76
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 307252

FOR AMBASSADOR FROM RA AND ARN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: BFOL, SY, PINS

SUBJECT: TEAR GAS GRENADES AND LAUNCHERS

REF: A) DAMASCUS 7229 B) STATE 298332

1. SINCE YOUR OFFICIAL-INFORMAL OF NOVEMBER 24 TO ATHERTON
CROSSED REF B, WE WOULD LIKE TO REVIEW THE BIDDING ON THIS
WHOLE MATTER. REF B WAS, OF COURSE, IN RESPONSE TO REF A,
AND A CONFIRMATION OF OUR RECENT DISCUSSIONS HERE.

2. WE DISCERN A DEFINITE INTEREST ON THE SYRIAN SIDE FOR
THESE MATERIALS AND ONLY WONDER IF SHIHABI MIGHT HAVE BEEN
KEPT IN THE DARK. THE INDICATIONS IN REF A, ALONG WITH
USDAO 559 OF 14 OCTOBER 1976 AND USDAO 568 OF 14 OCTOBER
1976 ALL POINT TO SARG INTEREST IN ACQUIRING TEAR GAS
GRENADES AND LAUNCHERS. IN MID-OCTOBER 1976 THE DEPARTMENT
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EVEN RECEIVED A QUERY FROM THE AAI CORPORATION, BALTIMORE,
MARYLAND, WHICH STATED THAT THE COMPANY HAD INFORMATION
THAT SARG WANTED TO BUY TEAR GAS GRENADES FOR THE SYRIAN
POLICE. DAMASCUS 5387 SUGGESTED THAT SARG SECURITY SERVICES
WERE INTERESTED IN IMPROVING THE GENERAL SECURITY SITUATION,
A TIPOFF PERHAPS THAT A DESIRE FOR TEAR GAS WAS DEVELOPING.

3. APPROACHES TO THE U.S. PROBABLY STEM FROM THE STRONG REPUTATION FOR RELIABILITY, SAFETY AND QUALITY WHICH U.S. TEAR GAS AND RELATED EQUIPMENT ENJOY OVER OTHER PRODUCERS.

4. WE PRESENTLY HAVE NO APPLICATIONS FOR EXPORT OF TEAR GAS TO SYRIA. REF B WAS DESIGNED TO CONFIRM THAT WE WOULD APPROVE MODEST SALES FOR BONAFIDE USE, SO THAT EMBASSY COULD RESPOND TO A QUERY.
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